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P R E A C H E D

Before the
King and Queen

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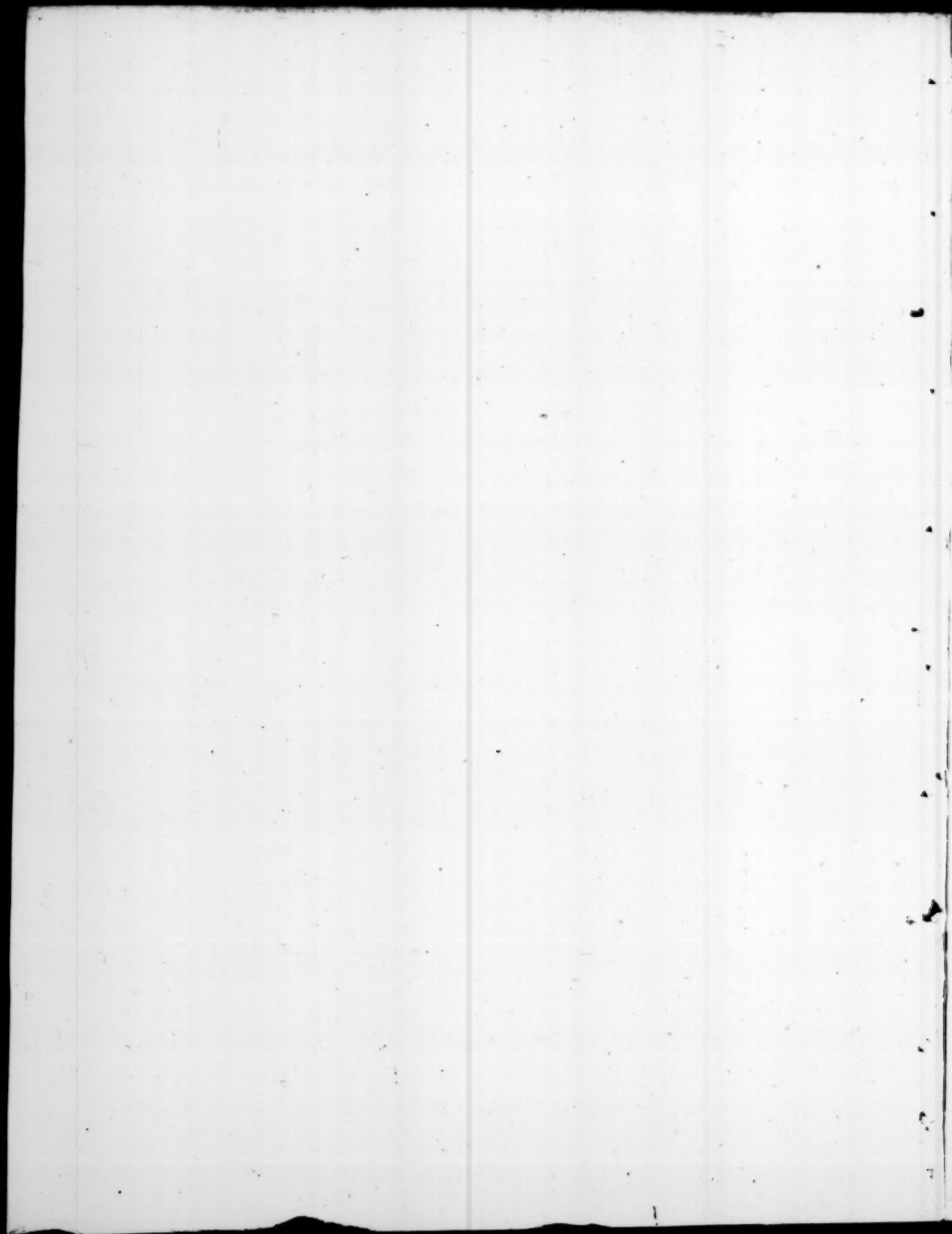
On Sunday, Jan. 15. 1692.

By J. LAMBE, Rector of *Wheathamstead*
in *Hartfordshire*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to
Their MAJESTIES.

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L O N D O N ,

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A S E R M O N

Preached before the

King and Queen.

ISAIAH lvii. 21.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the Wicked. The whole Period runs thus: But the wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, &c.

From the 15th. Verse, to the end of the Chapter, the Prophet proposes several Considerations to us, to persuade and excite us, to repent of our Sins, and amend our Lives ; as,

First, That a true Repentance will certainly be accepted ; That God has Compassion upon us still, and is unwilling to continue his Displeasure against us. For *I will not contend for ever*, at the 16th Verse, *Neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should*

should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

Secondly, From the Consideration of the happy Consequence of a true Repentance, the Displeasure of God shall cease, his Judgments shall be removed; our dread of God, our fear of his Power and Justice, shall be changed into an humble confidence of his Favour, into a sense, and enjoyment of his Love. Our Spirits will be sedate and quiet, our Mind serene, our Reflections chearful, and we shall be thoroughly satisfied in our selves. *I create the fruit of the lips, at the 19th ver. Peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.*

Thirdly and Lastly, From the Consideration of the Terrours, the Vexation and Despair, that do continually gall and torment the Wicked. *For the wicked are like the troubled Sea (at the 20th ver.) when it cannot Rest, whose waters cast up Mire and Dirt; There is no Peace to the Wicked, saith my God.* Which words consist of these two parts.

The First is a Positive Assertion, an Unlimited Proposition, *There is no Peace to the Wicked.*

The Second, is the Authority upon which the Proposition is established, even the Testimony of God Himself, *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

That

That God who created our Capacities, and therefore knows, both what will satisfie, and what will Grate upon them : That G O D, who is our God, who has a tender Regard for our Happinefs, whose very Effence is Truth and Goodnefs, who can neither be deceived Himself, nor impofe a Fallity upon us. It is this God, that faith, *There is no Peace to the wicked.*

And for the farther Illuftration of this important Truth, I fhall briefly proceed in this following Method.

First, I fhall explain the Terms, and confider (1.) Who are underftood by the *wicked*. And (2.) What by *Peace*, when it is faid, *There is no Peace to the wicked.*

Secondly, I fhall inquire into the reafons of the Propofition, and confider whence it comes to pafs, *That there is no Peace to the wicked.*

Thirdly and Laftly, I fhall endeavour to make it manifeft, That the Force or effect of thefe Reafons upon the Minds of the wicked, is by no means to be avoided : That as there is fufficient caufe, why they fhould be uneafie ; fo, in fact, they are affected, at leaft Habitually, with a fharp and pungent fenfe, of Pain and Mifery.

First, I fhall explain the terms, and confider,

1. Who we are here to underftand by the *wicked*.
And, 2. What

2. What by *Peace*, when it is said, *There is no Peace to the wicked.*

And First, By the *wicked* are understood such Persons as have thrown off the Government of God, and obey the Suggestions of their own Will; Dissolute Men, that Chuse, and Love, and Act by the Inclination of their sensual Appetites, without Regard, or in Contempt and Opposition to the Law of God. They are stiled in Scripture, *Sons of Belial*, or such as assume to themselves a boundless Liberty of doing whatsoever they list, for that is the meaning of the Word. And this Definition of the *Wicked*, agrees exactly with all the Accounts and Descriptions of them in the Holy Scriptures. *They set themselves against God, and against His Anointed*, says the Psalmist, (2. 3.) *saying, Let us break their Bonds in sunder, and cast away their Cords from us. They walk in the Ways of their own Hearts,* (Eccles. 11. 9.) *and in the sight of their own Eyes,* (says Solomon.) *They do their own Ways, and find their own Pleasures,* says the Prophet Isaiah, (58. 13.) *They are Children of Disobedience, fulfilling the Will of the Flesh, and of the Mind,* says the Apostle (Ephes. 2. 23.) That is the first.

Secondly, By *Peace*, in the Text, which is denied to the Wicked, we understand Tranquillity of Mind, and a Rational Uniform Satisfaction in our State.

State. *Peace*, I confess, is taken many times more generally for all Prosperity and Welfare, (*Ephes. 2. 17.*) but here it is understood in a more particular, and indeed, in the more usual sense, *viz.* of *Inward satisfaction*, and a Deliberate Content of mind. Because the *No-Peace* of the Wicked is opposed to the *Rest* and *Peace* of the Righteous, at the 19th verse; and because the Prophet has explained it thus himself, in the Words before my Text. *But the wicked are like a troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt. There is no Peace to the Wicked:* They shall never Attain to a State of true Content, or enjoy an Habitual, Steddy, Satisfaction. Thus much for the Explication of the Terms.

Secondly, I proceed, as I propos'd, in the Second place to consider the truth of the Proposition it self, or whence it comes to pass, *That there is no Peace to the Wicked.*

The kinds of his Trouble, and the Symptoms of his Disquietude are very many; but they all proceed from one or other of these following Causes, either,

1. From the Degeneracy of their own Nature. Or,
2. From the Malignity of Vice it self. Or,
3. And Lastly, From a sense of their Guilt, from their Dread of God, and of the terrible Sanctions of his Law.

First,

First of all, The Disquietude of the Wicked, arises from the Degeneracy of their own Nature. As the Goodness of God inclined him to Create the World, so His own most perfect Wisdom Assign'd to every sort of being, a peculiar End ; that so the several parts pursuing their Design, and fulfilling their Intent, should all Conspire to make up a perfect Harmony in the whole Creation, and should every one attain their own perfection, and enjoy the proper Happiness that is allotted to their Being.

But Man was highly Honoured, above the rest of his Fellow Creatures, Impress'd with the Image of God, and quickened by his Spirit ; Enobled with the Powers of Judgment and Election, entrusted with a Liberty of Action, and obliged to no other, than that Eternal Law of God Himself, that Purity of Will, that Universal Righteousness, which render the Divinity so Glorious, so Amiable, so Rever'd.

Wherefore then, so long as we preserve the Distinction of our Kind, our Likeness to God ; so long as we Judge, and Chuse, and Love according to his Example, and Command, so long we are happy ; we Exert our proper Powers, we are under no Controul, we gratifie our true Desires, we pursue the Design, and are Delighted with the Pleasures of God Himself.

But

But if we decline our proper Rule; if we suffer our Passions to prevail over our Judgment; if, laying aside our reason, and the Law of God, we Chuse, and Love, and Act by the Inclinations of the Body; we sink, of course, into a state that is evil to us in it self, that is necessarily miserable; into a Condition that is directly Opposite to the Intent of our Creation: Our Frame is Disordered, our Nature is Degenerate; we separate our selves from our Principle, and wander in untrodden, rugged Paths, Racked and Tormented with the Tumult, the Violence of our Passions, with Variety of Contradictions, with an eager desire of Happiness, and a continual Disappointment.

Maxima peccantium pœna est, peccasse, says Seneca. The greatest Punishment of Sin, is to have sinned. Sceleris in scelere, supplicium est. And this is that War, which the Apostle speaks of, between the Law of his Body, and the Law of his Mind; (Rom. 7. 23.) We may suppress our Notions of Good and Evil, in a great degree; but we cannot destroy them utterly. The Soul will strive to recover it self, it will be reaching after its proper Happiness; *The things which we would,* (there is still a desire after our Original Good, that we have lost) *tho', we do them not: and the things which we would not;* there is a Check, a Controul upon us, in the

practice of Vice ; our Pleasures are not free, we are under the Rebuke of our own Spirit, tho' *we do them*. That's the first.

2. Secondly, The Disquietude of the Wicked arises from the Malignity, the Mischievous Quality of Vice it self.

What is Vice, but Excess, or a Motion Præternatural? And therefore it is a Force upon us, and must of Necessity, be painful, and uneasy to us. As the Muscles, Nerves, and Sinews of the Body, so long as they move according to their Intention, so long we enjoy Delight, and Pleasure in their Motions: But if they are stretched beyond their proper use, we are immediately upon a Rack, tormented with a sense of the sharpest pains.

And thus in respect of the Faculties of our Souls; so long as we keep them within their Bounds; so long as we Believe, Desire, and Act, according to the Rules of Reason, and the Law of God; so long there is a perfect Symmetry, a pleasant Harmony in all our Motions, notwithstanding the great variety of Desire, Design, and Action, that we manage in the World: But if we forsake our Rule, if we indulge to our Passions, and become Extravagant, we are presently Discomposed, and out of order; we have brought a Sicknes, a Convulsion, a Dyscrasie upon our selves; a state, a Habit of Disease and Pain. And

And if any Wicked Man will cast up a fair account with himself, he shall find how his Vices have Deceived him ; what Pain and Anguish they have brought upon him, instead of those Delights, and Pleasures which they promised him. What Uneasiness, what Restlessness of Mind, what Debility of Body, what Prejudice in Interest, what a General Inconvenience.

Does not Impatience of Desire disquiet him, Malice and Revenge distract him, Repining Envy gnaw him ? Does not Ambition prey upon his Vital Spirits, and Intemperance Expose, Besot, and waste him ? That is the Second.

3. Thirdly and Lastly, the Disquietude of the Wicked arises from a sense of their Guilt, from their Dread of God, and of the Terrible Sanctions of His Law.

He hath appointed a Day, in the which He will Judge the World in Righteousness. (Acts 17. 31.) He will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing. (Eccles. 12. 14.) We must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, to give an account of our Actions done in the Body, whether they be good or evil. (2 Cor. 5. 10.) And they that have done Good, shall go into Life Everlasting, and they that have done Evil, into Everlasting Punishment. (Jo. 5. 28.)

This is the Immutable Law of God ; this is the Natural, the Universal Expectation of all Mankind.

How is it possible then, that a Man should endure himself, or enjoy his being, who is obnoxious to these grievous Pains ? What a dreadful Consideration it is to him, that he can neither escape his Tryal, Demulce the Anger, or avoid the Power of God ?

And therefore all the Terrors in the World, even Death it self, are trifles to the Wicked, in comparison of their fearful Expectation of a future Judgment ; when *the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven in flames of fire, to take vengeance of them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 2 Thes. 1. 8.

This is the *δαίμων ἐνὶ ἡμῶν*, that Genius within our selves, which *Socrates* speaks of, that Upbraids our Vices, and Torments our Consciences.

These Fears of a future Account, that are fixed and rooted in the Minds of Men, are a Constant Principle of Trouble and Confusion to the Wicked. His Guilt dismays him, his Fears Dispirit him, and Incurable Remorse Distracts him.

These are the *Arrows of the Almighty, the Poyson whereof*, says Holy *Job*, *will drink up our very Spirits.* (Job 6. 4.) *These again are the gall of Asps within*

within a Man, (Job 20. 14.) and the Terrors of the Lord that set themselves in array against us. Job 6. 4. These are the Rolling-pin, upon which the Pythagoreans place the Wicked; that gives them a continual Uneasiness. Οἱ δὲ κυλινδοῦσι ἄλλο τ' ἐπ' ἄλλο φερόνται.

And thus much for the second General, the Reasons of the Proposition, or whence it comes to pass, that *There is no Peace to the wicked.* And we find it arises,

1. From the Degeneracy of their own Nature.
2. From the Malignity of Vice it self.
3. And Lastly, from a sense of their Guilt, and the fear of Punishment.

Thirdly, I now proceed to the Third and Last Particular, and shall endeavour to make it manifest, That the Force, or Effect of these Reasons, upon the Minds of the Wicked, is utterly unavoidable; that as there is sufficient cause why they should be Uneasie; so in fact, they are affected at least habitually, with a sharp, and pungent sense of Pain and Misery. That the Cause, or Wickedness being put, Disquietude and Trouble will follow of necessity, not in *Reason* only, but in *Fact*.

This one thing I premise, that we speak of Men of understanding, that are capable of common sense;

sense; of such as have the use of their Reason, who fear what is terrible, and expect such Events as are probable.

And as for those stupid, senseless Wretches, if there are any such, whom nothing can affect, I think they are sad Examples of this present truth, in that they Decline the Judgment of their Consciences, and are run away from themselves, that they may Avoid the Anxiety of their own Minds.

That then, which I propose to my self, for the Illustration of this Particular is, to Consider a Wicked Man, (1.) under all the several Sentiments of Religion; And (2.) in all the various Fortunes of the World, and endeavour to prove, that there is no Relief, against the force of the former Reasons, to be found in any of them.

And these two General Heads will take in all the Refuges, to which the Wicked have ever had Recourse.

1. First then, I shall consider a Wicked Man under all the several Sentiments of Religion, and endeavour to prove, That no Hypothesis whatsoever, will afford him any satisfaction.

If it were possible for a Wicked Man, to be absolutely Unconcern'd about the matter of Religion, it might be impertinent to consider his Opinion of it. But Religion pretends to determine
our

our Happiness, to direct our Lives, and oblige our Obedience by the Sanction of Eternal Punishment. And therefore no Man can be easie till he has considered it. It is not founded upon the Sand, or publisht by a few Designing Men ; but it pretends to an agreement with the Principles of our Nature, the free Inclinations of our Souls, and to the General Consent of all Men : To the support of a Supernatural Revelation that has settled it, of an Almighty Power that has Attested, and Confirm'd it.

And therefore no Man can be throughly satisfied in his State, unless he either (1.) Conforms his Life to the Law, that he may acquit himself at the Day of Judgment ; or (2.) frames such a Notion of Religion to himself, as shall deliver his Mind from the fear of the Law ; and that must be one or other of these that follow.

1. Either first the Principles of Religion are false.

2. Or at least, that they are not Infallibly certain.

3. Or if they are, yet however, That the Goodness of God will forgive us at the Last.

And in Fact and Practice every Wicked Man, that has retained his common Sense, has actually taken Sanctuary in one or other of these Opinions of Religion.

I shall therefore consider, what Reasonable Satisfaction may be found in any of them.

And First in *Atheism*. *Lucretius* boasts extreamly of the happy Effects, that will certainly follow, upon a firm perswasion, That there is no G O D. *Exæquat nos Victoria Cælo*. If there was, indeed, such a Being as a God, He could not be more happy than we are, who have delivered our Minds from the Belief and Fear of Him. We now are Masters of our selves, we are under no Controul, no slavish Fears affright us, no Terrible Apprehensions sowre our Pleasures; we may now enjoy our selves without Regard, and Exult in that Intire and perfect Liberty we have attain'd.

But this is all a Shadow, a meer Imagination; for alas! They beg the Question of themselves, they rejoyce in the Inferences, which they draw from a Proposition, of the truth whereof they are not, they cannot be assured.

Neither the *Epicureans* themselves, nor any other sort of Men, did ever pretend to Demonstrate, or Affirm directly, *That there is no God*; That there is no Conscious, Self-existent Being that made the World in Wisdom, and preserves it by His Power.

Such a Notion is Encumbred with so many Difficulties, that we may venture to say, It is
Impossi-

Impossible for a Man in his Wits, to bring his mind to a perfect acquiescence in it.

That the most Wonderful Effects should be produced without a sufficient Cause; That the most Curious Building, for Beauty, Proportion, and Consent of parts, should jumble by chance, into the most Excellent Order; That the Dust in the Street, by a kind Position, Site, and Motion of the Parts, may come to be sensible of Pleasure and Pain, and capable of Thinking, Arts, and Policy.

These things, (and many other, and grosser Consequences of that Opinion, That there is no God) are so Absurd, that we Reluct against them; that we Reject them as it were by an Anticipation of mind. Those Seminal Principles, that are Inseparable from our Nature, Resist the Notion.

And therefore Atheistical Persons rather *Wish* there was no God, than go about to prove it. They content themselves with Cavilling at the Accounts that are given of the Nature, and Providence of God, and the Creation of the World; but are very tender of Asserting the Negative in terms, or of owning the Necessary Consequences of that Opinion.

And it has always been observed, That those who have pretended to be *Atheists*, have discover-

ed their Distrust of that Opinion, whether they would, or no ; and that not only by *Suetonius*, of *Caligula*, but by *Tully*, and all that have writ upon the Question, of all the *Atheists* they have ever known, or heard of.

This therefore is no Principle of Peace, no Refuge against the Fear of Invincible Powers, or the danger of a Future Account. For after a Wicked Man has brought himself as near to an *Atheist* as he can, he shall be as much tormented with the Distrust of his Principle, as he was before, with his Fears of God, and of a future Judgment.

But if we suppose that they could extinguish the Notion of Religion, and suppress all sense, and apprehension of God, and his Providence in the World: Yet how can they expect any true Content, or Happiness from thence? *If in this Life only we had hope*, Man, of all the Beings in the World, would be the most Wretched and Contemptible.

That small degree of Reason we are Masters of, would be the Instrument of the greatest Mischief we can imagine.

For what is Reason without Religion, but Craft and Subtilty, to delude, and cheat, and procure to our selves, by any means, whatsoever we can bring within our Reach? Earthquakes, Hurricanes,

ricanes, the Tyger, and the Lyon, are Innocent, and Harmless things, in comparison of Men, conspiring Mischief one against another, without Controul.

And therefore, if there was not a God above, who Restrains, and Separates the Boisterous Spirits of Men, the World would be nothing else, but a Stage of Confusion, War, and Blood. Every one would endeavour to supplant his Neighbour; Society would be Dangerous; Black, and Uncomfortable, Solitude our only Refuge.

Finally, If there is indeed no other Principle in the World, but Blind, Inconscious matter, there can be no Stability, no Security that it will continue. Why should it not dissolve again into an Indigested heap? For *Instability is implied in Chance and Fortune*, says *Tully*, upon the like Occasion. (*De nat. Deor.*)

But is there any foundation of Rest or Pleasure, whilst all that we Have, or Hope for, is Obnoxious to continual Change, and we our selves to Annihilation? Yet nothing but an Almighty Providence can support our hope; no other Principle can preserve the matter in the Condition that it is, *ὅτι μὴ πλείους ἀτακτὰ γένηται*, That all Things do not immediately run into a Mass, a Heap again.

And thus it appears that there is no Content, or solid Satisfaction to be found in *Atheism*. It is impossible for us to be fully perswaded of the Principle; or if we were, yet nevertheless, we should be as Miserable as we can imagine.

2. And therefore, Secondly, We will suppose a Wicked Man a *Sceptic*, (or one that does not directly deny, but, however, is not thoroughly satisfied of the Truth of Religion, and a Future State) and consider whether this Opinion is a surer ground of satisfaction to him, than the other.

And this, indeed, is the most usual Refuge of the wicked. It is more easily apprehended, and therefore the more greedily Imbib'd. It is far more easie to Carp at the Management of a Question, than to Confute the Principles upon which it is founded. A little Wit, and a great deal of Confidence will serve them here, instead of that Judgment in Philosophy, that intire, and perfect Victory over our own Nature, which the other Refuge will require.

And therefore to pacifie their Consciences, and suppress their Fears of a future Account, they endeavour to make themselves believe, That tho' the Being of God, and the Principles of Religion, may be probable, yet that they are not Infallibly certain, or impossible to be false: That it cannot
be

be proved by *Demonstration*, that God takes notice of our Actions, and will bring us to Account. And therefore, why, say they, should we Restrain our Inclinations, or act, upon Principles, that may *possibly* deceive us ?

And thus upon the strength of this little foolish Reasoning, they Encourage themselves in a Beluine Liberty they have taken, and laugh at the Credulity of all the Religious World.

Especially, if they can find an Author of Note, who favours their Opinion, that they may boast Authority ; or a Book ill writ, on the other side, that they may Ridicule it ; or an unaccountable Providence, that they may Carp and Object against it : Any difficult Passage in Scripture-History, or Doctrine, that they may Burlesque it ; any Question of the *Modus* of things Divine, and Mystical, that is not easily solv'd, that they may Deride and-Insult it.

And thus provided, they hope at once to Cure their Fears, and raise a Reputation of Wit and Judgment to themselves.

But let us suppose it to be true, as it is really false, That the Principles of Religion are not *Infallibly* certain, (tho' that is a Deceitful Phrase, since any Truth is Infalible as to us, or to the Inclination of our Belief, and Practice, that is as
Mani-

Manifest as the nature of the thing is capable of being proved, as all the Principles of Religion are. But let us suppose, however, that they are not so Evident as it is *possible* for them to be; yet since they are not *plainly* false, by their own Confession, or so *Improbable*, that they dare deny them boldly, and reject them *utterly*; they shall find no Peace, no solid satisfaction, in this Hypothesis.

For Doubting is Anxious in its Nature, because it is the Leaning of the Judgment to both the sides of the Proposition. In a matter of less Concernment, it is very troublesome, the Mind is Distracted, and upon the Fret, according to the value of the matter in debate, till it comes to a Resolution.

But what shall we say, when the Question is of no less Importance, than an Eternal Life, of Happiness, or Misery? Nothing less than a Security that cannot *possibly* Deceive us, will remove our Fears of so great a Danger.

In the Belief and Practice of Religion, we should have a Reasonable Satisfaction, tho' our Principles should be liable to Exception; because we sustain no present Damage, nor run any Hazard of future Evil. But those who Despise, and Oppose it, can never be at ease, unless they proceed

ceed upon the surest and most certain grounds, because they are undone for ever, if they shall happen to be mistaken.

And therefore, if there was but so much reason on the side of Religion, as might support a fair Dispute: yet Wisdom would adhere to the Affirmative, and Oblige us to Piety and Vertue; since no Man can be absolutely out of Danger any other way.

So that unless a *Sceptic* can Extinguish Humane Nature, and Vanquish all his Principles of Common Sense, he can never support an Habitual Peace in his Mind upon this Foundation.

3. Wherefore Lastly, We will suppose a Wicked Man a Christian, and consider whether he may find any Grounds of Peace, and Comfort to himself, in that Religion.

And in truth, that Deluge of Profaneness, which Over-spreads the Christian World; that Ambition, Treachery, and Injustice; that Violation of Faith, that Barbarity of Manners, and the Havock that is made of Christian Blood: Those causeless Schisms, Heresies, and Hypocrisie, that every where abound, might Incline an Indifferent Man to Believe that Christianity had indeed Released us from all Obligations of Nature, and Revelation.

But

But if we understand it, we cannot so Mistake it; and if we well Considered it, we could not Deviate so grossly, from the Rules and Precepts of it.

For does it not Oblige us to Universal Righteousness without Reserve? to things that are *Lovely and of Good Report* (Phil. 4. 8.) as well as to those that are Simply Honest? And that not in Action only, but in our Principle; not only that we do our Duty, but that we Love, Prefer, and Chuse it? And is not all, and every part of this, secured, by the most Terrible Sanction of Eternal Death? *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that does Evil? These shall go away into Everlasting Punishment?* Without any Condition or Limitation, excepting that of Repentance only. (St. Mat. 25. ult. Rom. 2. 9.)

And when all this is said, shall we please ourselves, as the Wicked do, with Vain Opinions, such as these:

1. That our Religion is rather a Scheme of Divine Philosophy, than a Rule of Life.
2. That the Goodness of God will moderate the severity of his Law.
3. That He, who sent His Son to save us, will never Inflict Eternal Punishment upon us.
4. That

4. That all these things are threatned in *Terror*, to maintain a Decorum in the World ; but that there is no danger of their Execution.

But how can we trust to so weak a Support ? to Notions that we frame to our selves, without any Colour of Reason, or so much as a Pretence to Revelation ? Is not the Law it self, both *Holy, Just, and Good*, fitted to our Capacities, suited to our Interests, and framed by the true Dispositions of our Nature ? Is it not written in our very Mind ? Is it not nigh unto us, even in us all ? Is it not fixed and fastned upon us, by the inward Conviction of our own Consciences, by the outward Ministrations of the Word, and Sacraments, by the Divine Operations of the Holy Spirit ?

What then is to be said ? Why should we hope, against all the Reasons of Government, that notwithstanding this, Transgressors shall Escape Unpunished ?

Let us not deceive our selves with fond, ungrounded Notions of Infinite Goodness. God is Good, 'tis true, but He is also Just ; and every Single Attribute in God, is exercised with safety to the rest ; His Mercy with safety to His Justice. And this is that Eternal Rule, which God is pleased to govern His Proceedings by. *Shall we*

sin then, says the Apostle, upon the like occasion, that Grace may Abound? God forbid!

Thus then it appears, That Christianity affords no Comfort to the Wicked, so long as they continue so.

It is true, It invites us to Repenrance, upon this very Consideration, That our Souls shall be then Refreshed, (St. Matt. 11.) That we shall have peace of Conscience, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, (Rom. 4. 17.) That we shall be settled in a Blessed Hope, (Tit. 2. 12.) That our Joy shall be full, (Joh. 16. 24.) and such as no Man shall take from us, V. 22. But neither Christianity, nor any other Notion of Religion, will give us any Peace, or solid Satisfaction, in a State of Wickedness.

And as there is no Relief to the Wicked, in any Notion of Religion.

2. So, in the Second place, there is no Ease, no Peace to be found, by them, in any State of Life, in any Condition whatsoever.

And, First, not in Prosperity.

We will suppose him the darling of Fortune, and under a free Enjoyment of all that the World bestows upon its greatest Favourites. Let him be strong of Body, in the Flower of his Beauty, and the Prime of his Youth; Let his Family be renowned, his Titles Swelling, and his Estate Magnificent;

nificent ; Let him lie in his Prince's Bosom, let his Enemies fear him, and his Friends Address, and Court him.

Yet, Alas ! How little an Advantage is all this to him ? It may Enable him to Stifle, to Quiet the Symptoms, for the present ; but the Distemper will return upon him with a greater Violence.

The Accidents of Fortune, make no Alteration in his Nature, no difference in the Reasons of his future Expectation ; and therefore they can be no cure of his Disease.

What pleasure, then, in Attendance, Baths, and Feasting, when a Man is ill at Ease ? What Enjoyment of the World, when a Man is Condemn'd to Die ?

*Non enim Gazæ, neque Consularis
Summovet lictor Miseros tumultus
Mentis, &c.* Hor.

In short, they may hide him, a little, now and then, but they cannot separate him from *himself*.

2. And if there is no Peace to the Wicked in Prosperity, much less shall they find it in Adversity : In forsaken Age, in Wretched Poverty, in Painful Sickness, in a general Neglect.

There is a proper Happiness, a sufficient Support, in every Condition, to Balance all that is wanting, to the Good and Vertuous. For besides a Cheerful Reflection upon themselves, that they have done, what lay in them, to prevent the Evil that is come upon them: And besides the Pleasure they may find, in the Exercise of Christian Patience, in the raising of their Spirit above the power of Fortune. Besides these, I say, there is an unspeakable Joy, in their Prospect of a future Life; a Life that never shall decay, a Continued *state* of Happiness, that shall never fail. But the Wicked deprive themselves of all the *supports*, and benefits of Humane Nature. They have a Pain upon them, that nothing can Relieve or Cure. *For the Spirit of a Man may sustain his Infirmities, (all the Calamities of this Mortal Life) but a Wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14.

3. There is, then, no Comfort to the Wicked whilst they live; and therefore they cannot hope for any when they come to Die.

Now all the Principles of Anguish and Vexation, will act upon them with their *utmost* force. No Poynant Pleasure to deceive them now; no Idle Scoffer to Encourage them; no Flatterer to sooth them; no Guard to break the Blow. Now then their Hearts Condemn them, their Conscien-

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ces accuse them, their Guilt amazes them, and their own Breast is a *Consuming Fire*, before they fall into the Hands of the *Living God*.

And thus it appears, That as there is always Reason enough, why a Wicked Man should be uneasie : so the Force, and Effect of those Reasons upon the Minds of the Wicked, is utterly unavoidable.

U S E.

It now remains, That we *Consider this, and shew our selves Men*. Tranquillity is our Sovereign Good, it is the end of all our Labours, and the Crown of Wisdom. But *there is no Peace to the Wicked*; it is not to be found in the Paths of Vice.

Plutarch upbraids the *Epicureans*, for their narrow, base Conceptions of Humane Nature, as if our only way to be happy, was *ἡμετέριον ἢ ἀνθρώπων ὄλον*, &c. wholly to resolve our selves into the Body; to drown the Soul in Sensual Pleasures.

If therefore any of us have been deceived in this particular; If we have wandered out of the way of our Content and Happiness, let us be perswaded to return again with all our Might. Let us at last Conform our selves to the Religion we profess:

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Let us endeavour to transcribe our Saviour's Copy, that we may walk, as He also walked, and Be, as He was in the World, 1 Joh. 2. 6.

So shall our Life be happy, and our Peace shall be full. So shall we know both how to Abound, and how to Want, and how to be Happy in all Conditions. So shall the God of Peace, come into us, and abide with us for ever, to clear our Doubts, Encourage our Faith, Assure our Hope, Facilitate our Endeavours, and refresh us with the Irradiations of his Love, till he bring us, at last, to a fulness of Joy, to that Eternal Rest which He has provided for us.

Of which Unspeakable Bliss, may God, of His Infinite Mercy, make us all Partakers, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Praise, and Glory, now, and for ever, Amen.

F I N I S.

